

These different methods of obtaining the same result may prove valuable to some of the less scientific readers of *THE BUILDER*, by shewing them in what manner the fundamental principles of hydrostatics are to be applied in this and all similar inquiries.

So much then for the method of estimating the total and the mean pressure on the upright surface of the cistern, an estimation that should never be neglected when safety is an object of consideration; the downward or vertical pressure, however, is not necessary to be considered in the present case, for since the vessel was placed on a solid and level foundation, there could be no danger of failure in the bottom parts, the brickwork performing the same office as an additional thickness in the metal.

(To be continued.)

ARCHITECTURAL NEWS FROM PARIS.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Architectural improvement is marching with gigantic strides in Paris. In every quarter old houses are being thrown down, and palaces erected in their places; mansions are springing up in spots that for centuries have been receptacles for mud and filth; narrow courts and streets are being swept away, and magnificent streets erected on their sites. In no city in the wide world have such striking improvements been effected within a short time as in Paris, and certainly in no other are such vast improvements projected. Among the ameliorations made within the last two years, or now in progress, may be cited the opening of the Rue Rambuteau, which is a magnificent thoroughfare, in a densely populated quarter; a splendid street from the Palais de Justice to Notre Dame, whereby the abominable nest of tumble-down houses in the old city have been swept away; several new streets of lofty mansions in the Quarter de Tivoli; a splendid street and square facing the Versailles and Rouen railway station, in the Rue St. Lazare; a fine but simple station for the Northern railway; three new streets between the Bank of France and the Bourse; three or four new streets in the parcels of land adjacent to the St. Germain's railway; a new street between the Faubourg du Roule and the Champs Elysees; two or three others at Montmartre; several magnificent palaces in the Champs Elysees (prominent among them that of the Comtesse de Léon); the Boulevard des Capucines, the Boulevard des Italiens, &c.; the new Rue de Beaumont, from the Boulevard to the Rue Bergere; several new streets between the Faubourg Montmartre and the Faubourg Poissonniere; the Rue Lafayette, the termination of the splendid church of St. Vincent de Paul; the restoration of the venerable Cathedral of Notre Dame; the complete reparation and decoration of the Church of St. Germain L'Auxerrois; a new chapel for the Virgin in the Church of St. Sulpice; the decoration of the Chamber of Peers; the finishing of the Hotel de Ville; a new facade to the Hospital de la Charite; an elegant and simple Protestant chapel for the Germans; a new prison for a trial of the separate confinement system; the splendid and costly decorations of that beautiful pile, the Church of the Madeleine; a vast entrepôt for the Rouen and Havre railways; and, last but not least, a palace lately commenced for the ministry of foreign affairs. Among the improvements about to be undertaken, are the erection of a new opera house, worthy, by its architectural magnificence, to be the great musical theatre of France; a east station for the Paris and Lyon railway, and another for the Paris and Strasbourg; a new hospital on the Clos St. Lazare, adjoining the Northern railway; a new church on the vast lands of Belle Chasse, in the Faubourg St. Germain; several new buildings for rare and curious birds and animals, in the Garden of Plants; the continuation of the Rue de Rivoli to the Hotel de Ville; a new Bibliothèque Royale; some new streets in densely-habited quarters; one or two squares on the London system; the completion of the Pantheon by the erection on the top of the lantern of the statue of Immortality, and other improvements; two new markets, with all the latest ameliorations introduced in England, Holland, the continent of Europe, and the United States; vast entrepôts for goods

and merchandise arriving by the Northern and Strasbourg railways; the completion of the Louvre and the Place de Carrousel, and the erection of several public edifices of minor importance.

Of all these projects the most important are undoubtedly the new Opera and the new National Library, or Bibliothèque Royale. With respect to the former, the public authorities and people of all classes are unanimous in thinking it absolutely necessary. The present Académie Royale de Musique is a disgrace to such a city as Paris, which haughtily claims to be the capital of civilization. It was originally designed as a temporary structure, on the destruction of the edifice of the Place de Louvois, and was, as such, hastily run up in wood. More than twenty years have elapsed since then, and yet no plans for a new theatre have been definitively chosen. But there are few things which press more strongly for a prompt decision, for, in addition to the disgrace of having a miserably dingy wooden structure, for the home of the musical drama of such a nation as France, there is every hour most imminent danger of its being destroyed by fire, and not it only, but the entire quarter in which it is situated. Its existence for so long a period may be considered the result of a miracle. For my part, if I were a Frenchman, I would brave the laws against arson, and, at the risk of the gallies for life, set fire to it; for to destroy it would really be to render a service to the public and the country. It appears that the great difficulty of coming to a decision for pulling it down, is the choice of the site for a new theatre. The Minister of the Interior, supported by the directions of the Department of Fine Arts—the committee that superintends public buildings, &c., recommends the piece of ground at present occupied by the Meir of the second Arrondissement. It is close to the existing theatre, and is a site of considerable extent, perfectly isolated, and in the midst of the very best quarter of the town. The greater part of the aristocracy and superior classes also warmly support that site, as do likewise the inhabitants of the new quarters of Montmartre, Tivoli, Lafayette, Batignolles, &c. But the corporation of Paris strongly opposes it, insisting, instead, on the Place du Palais Royal. Many circumstances, it must be confessed, militate strongly in favour of the views of the corporation. First of all, the site they recommend would be in the centre of the town, and thereby easily accessible to the entire population; next, it would cost just one-fourth less than that of the Rue Grange Bateliere; thirdly, it would have the effect of sweeping away a nest of wretched and dirty houses, and of making the quarter the most magnificent in Europe; for on one side would be the Louvre, on another the Tuilleries, on a third the Palais Royal, whilst one of the principal thoroughfares leading to it, would be the majestic Rue de Rivoli. Upon the whole, therefore, I incline to think that that site ought to be chosen. The corporation will not hear of any other, and if another be selected, will not give a single sou, whilst with that, it is proposed to award six, eight, perhaps twelve million francs for the new theatre. At this moment the matter is undergoing investigation by the municipal authorities, and in the course of the ensuing session, the Minister of the Interior will doubtless introduce a law for the erection of the new opera house.

With regard to the Bibliothèque Royale, there are also discussions as to the site, but none at present has been definitely fixed upon. The present buildings are long and straggling, covering an immense surface of ground, and manifesting a great desire to tumble into ruins—a disaster from which they are only saved by heavy annual outlays. Exist much longer they cannot, even with all the expense they occasion, and so down they must come. The government proposes to erect the new library in a different quarter of the town altogether, so as to be able to sell the parcels of land in which the present edifice stands. Those parcels are in one of the busiest, richest, and most populous quarters of the town; and their sale would realise an immense sum, almost enough to pay for the new building. But interested parties object to a change of the present site, on the ground that in any other quarter of the town it would be inconvenient to that small portion of the public which frequents the library. It is not likely, however, that their

convenience will be permitted to outweigh the general interest which undoubtedly requires the removal of the present odious Bibliothèque Royale, and the sale of the site on which it stands.

Paris, Dec. 22nd.

GOETHE—ON PALLADIO.

VICENZA, 19th Sept. 1786.* During the few hours that I have been here, I have run over the place, and have glanced at the Olympia theatre and the buildings of Palladio. A pretty little book illustrated by engravings, has been published for the use of travellers, together with some artistic remarks. When, however, we find ourselves in sight of these works, then only we perceive their great worth; because it is their destination to fill up by actual grandeur and reality, and to satisfy our mind by the beautiful harmony of their dimensions—not merely in abstract plans lying before us, but by the whole starting and receding of their perspective. And thus, I say of Palladio, that he was a thoroughly internal, and from the very inmost, a great man. The main difficulty, however, with which he, like all modern architects had to grapple, was the adequate use of architectural orders in civic (profane) buildings; because it is, after all, incongruous, to combine walls and columns. But it is astonishing to see, how he has worked these up together—how he imposes upon us by the viewing of his works, and makes us forget, that it is still imposition. There is, really, something God-like in his works, alike to the forms of a great poet, who from out of truth and untruth makes a third, whose relative reality is still enchanting.

If, however, we view on the spot those splendid monuments raised by that man, and find how they have been already disfigured by uncleanly habits—how their plans mostly exceeded the means of their owners; how little, after all, these precious monuments of an elevated mind tally with the life and existence of those around—we shall be forcibly reminded, that things are every where the same: because we get no thanks if we endeavour to elevate men's inner wants, to give them a great idea of themselves, impress on them the feeling of the magnitude of a real and noble existence! But if you belie these birds,† tell them stories, helping them on from day to day—corrupt them; then you are their man, and it is therefore, that modern time rejoices in so many absurdities. I do not say so to depreciate my own friends (!), I say merely, that they are so, and that we must not wonder, that things are as they are.

How the basilica of Palladio looks close to an old castle-like building, covered with dissimilar windows, which, together with the steeples, the architect thought of removing—can be scarcely uttered by words; and it needs for me to use all self-control, as I find alas! even here, what I hate and love, close together.

21st Sept.—I went to see the old architect, Scamozzi, the editor of Palladio's buildings, a sterling enthusiastic artist. He gave me some useful information, joyous at my interest in these matters. There is one amongst the buildings of Palladio, for which I always had a great predilection; they say, it was his own dwelling—but being seen, it is far more than would appear from the design. I would wish to see it drawn and coloured in that way, as age and the kind of material have made it now. We must not think, however, that the artist has built a palace for himself. It is the most modest house in the world, and has but two windows, which are separated by a space sufficient to bear a third opening. If a picture were made of it, comprising the neighbouring houses, it would be amusing to see how it is interpolated betwixt them. Canaletti ought to have painted it.

To-day I visited that show-palace (*Pracht-haus*), situate half an hour from the city, on a pleasing eminence—called the *Rotonda*. It is a square building, containing a round saloon lighted from above. From the four sides you ascend on broad stairs, and reach at every side a porch, formed by six Corinthian pillars. It may be, that architecture never pushed open

* *Italienische Reise*, Vol. I.

† Allusion to the comedy of Aristophanes, and to analogous poem of Goethe himself.—*Transl.*